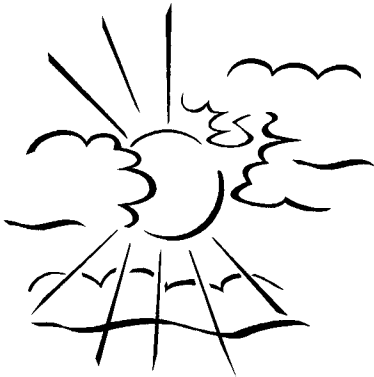


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Articles in Today's Clips

Thursday, March 30, 2006

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

| TOPIC | PAGE |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| *Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection | 2-14 |
| Health Care | 15-17 |
| Child Support | 18 |
| Juvenile Justice | 19 |
| Adoption | 20 |
| Migrant Workers | 21-22 |
| Tax Assistance | 23 |
| News Release | 24-25 |

*Important story at this spot

Boy's mom 'just went nuts,' says his father

Court hears taped talk

March 30, 2006

BY JACK KRESNAK
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

MASON -- A recorded jailhouse conversation Tim Holland had with his mother gave a disturbing glimpse of life inside the family's home at the time of his adopted son Ricky's death. In the recording played Wednesday in 55th District Court, Holland accuses his wife, Lisa, of killing the 7-year-old boy. He also says she threatened to kill their four other children if he didn't cooperate in covering up Ricky's death.

"She just went nuts," Tim Holland, 37, told his adoptive mother, Arcie Holland, whom he called Aunt Arcie, during a Feb. 7 conversation at the Ingham County Jail.

The Hollands each are charged with murder and first-degree child abuse in the case. They reported Ricky missing last July, but in January Tim Holland led authorities to his son's skeletal remains.

Holland explained to his mother that when he returned home in late June from military training in California, what he discovered frightened him: Ricky was tied to his bed as punishment for bad behavior and "looked pale and peaked.."

He had to untie the boy. He said Lisa Holland, 33, also forced Ricky to drink a family-size can of tomato soup and ordered other family members not to feed him.

Tim Holland said in the recording that he'd called his mother to arrange for the boy to stay at her house because he was worried for Ricky's safety.

But by the time he got off the phone, he said, it was too late.

"I came down and saw her yank him out of his room," Holland said. "She hit him with a hammer."

Holland said that his wife had "ruined my life," and her threats kept him from going to authorities.

"She threatened to kill the other kids," Holland said, if he didn't help her cover up Ricky's death.

"Well, Aunt Arcie, I made a stupid choice and now I'm paying for it," he said.

She asked how he knew where Ricky's body had been dumped. He had taken police to it.

"That's where she told me to go," Holland said of the remote wetlands area several miles south of their Leroy Township home where Ricky's decomposed remains were found inside two garbage bags.

The Hollands each accuse one another of killing Ricky, and a preliminary exam in the Mason courthouse entered its 12th day Wednesday.

Judge Rosemarie Aquilina cannot consider the recording as evidence against Lisa Holland. It only can be considered regarding Tim Holland's role.

In addition to recording the conversation between Holland and his mother, the Ingham County Sheriff's Department also has been recording discussions between the attorneys and the Hollands.

Assistant Ingham County Prosecutor Mike Ferency told Aquilina on Wednesday that sheriff's deputies were told not to listen to those conversations.

But the judge said she was appalled to learn of those recordings and ordered the sheriff's department to stop.

The preliminary exam continues today, when the prosecution is expected to rest its case.

Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at jkresnak@freepress.com.

Ricky's mother 'just went nuts'

In taped talk, Tim says wife became enraged when he tried to intervene to stop abuse.

Karen Bouffard / The Detroit News

Thursday, March 30, 2006

MASON -- Lisa Holland "just went nuts" and hit her adopted 7-year-old, Ricky, in the head with a hammer, her husband said in a tape-recorded jailhouse conversation with his mother.

The dramatic tape was played during Lisa and Tim Holland's preliminary hearing Wednesday in Ingham County District Court. Both stand accused of murdering Ricky, and have accused each other of committing the crime.

In the taped conversation with his adopted mother, Arcie Holland, a sobbing Tim recounted abuse he says his wife heaped on the boy -- including restricting his food and tying him to a bed. "I would go (away) and I would come back and she would have him tied to the bed and I wouldn't know for how long," he said. "I would untie him, he would look pale and peaked." Tim Holland said he took a stand against the abuse on July 2 -- the day Ricky was killed. He said he told his wife he was going to take Ricky from their home in Williamston to Arcie Holland's house.

"Earlier in the day, she had made (Ricky) drink a family-sized can of tomato soup," Tim Holland said.

"I tried to get him out of my house and I wanted to bring him to your house and that is what set her off."

Tim Holland informed Lisa that "Ricky's going to stay with my mom for two weeks. And that's where she just went nuts. She came downstairs. I saw her yank him out of his room and then she hit him with a hammer."

Tim and Lisa told authorities that Ricky ran away from home July 2. Tim led authorities to the child's body in rural Ingham County Jan. 27.

Witnesses have said state child welfare workers were repeatedly told that Ricky was being abused, but allowed him to remain in the home.

On the tape, Arcie Holland, who was Tim's aunt before she adopted him, asked her son how he knew where Ricky's body was buried. "That's where she told me to go. She told me she'd kill the other kids" if he refused, Tim responded.

"I made a stupid choice. Now I'm paying for it," he said.

Tim Holland said his adopted son Joseph, now 4, may have seen Lisa hit Ricky with the hammer. Tim Holland also blamed Lisa's father, Tom Taylor of Williamston.

"I know when Mr. Taylor, when I was not away, if Lisa said, 'Don't feed Ricky,' he wouldn't feed him," Tim Holland said.

"I got onto Mr. Taylor for that and for stripping Ricky out of his clothes and making him stand in the corner so he wouldn't run away."

The tape was introduced by Ingham County Detective Sgt. Roy Holiday.

During the defense attorney's questioning of Holiday, it was revealed that conversations between prisoners and their attorneys are routinely taped by their jailers.

Also Wednesday, a state police forensic scientist testified that blood was found throughout the Hollands' home and vehicles.

The scientist, Ann Gordon, said DNA testing is incomplete, so the source of the blood has not been pinpointed. Most of the blood was discovered during a search of the Hollands' home by investigators for the state police crime lab and Ingham County Sheriff's Department investigators Sept. 6 -- two months after the Hollands claimed Ricky had run away, and nearly five months before his body was found.

The preliminary hearing is scheduled to continue today.

You can reach Karen Bouffard at (734) 462-2206 or kbouffard@detnews.com.

Dispute set Lisa off, Tim told mom Jailhouse tape: Dad wanted Ricky to stay with relative

By Kevin Grasha
Lansing State Journal

Published March 30, 2006

MASON - Lisa Holland violently pulled her son Ricky out of his room and "just went nuts," Tim Holland told his adoptive mother during a taped jailhouse conversation in early February.

Tim Holland told Arcie Holland, whom he referred to as "Aunt Arcie," that telling his wife he wanted their son Ricky to stay at Arcie's house for a few weeks "set her off." Lisa then hit the 7-year-old with a hammer, Tim Holland said.

"I tried to get him out of the house to your house," he told Arcie Holland, "and she just went nuts."

About five minutes of the 21-minute conversation, recorded the afternoon of Feb. 7 at the Ingham County Jail, was played in court Wednesday as part of the Hollands' preliminary hearing. Both are charged with murder in the death of their son.

Tim reported Ricky missing July 2. He led police to the boy's remains in rural Ingham County nearly seven months later.

Before playing the recording, it was emphasized that what Tim Holland said could only be used against him; the statements of one co-defendant can't be used against the other.

On the audiotape, Arcie Holland asked Tim how he knew where Ricky's body had been dumped.

"Because that's where she told me to go," he said, adding that Lisa threatened to kill Ricky's siblings if he refused.

Near the end of the recording played Wednesday, Tim Holland said, "I made a stupid choice, and now I'm paying for it."

He also said that after Lisa struck Ricky, there was "red stuff" around his mouth and shirt, as well as on his bed.

"I was downstairs talking to you," Tim told Arcie Holland. "That's when she came downstairs, and I saw her yank him out of his room, and she hit him with a hammer."

He added that Ricky's younger brother may have seen what happened.

Tim Holland, who used to work as a counter-intelligence special agent for the Army, said Lisa would tie Ricky to his bed when he went away on temporary duty.

"When I got home, he'd look pale and peaked," he said.

At the end of the day's testimony, tempers flared when it was revealed that all visits and telephone conversations - even those between attorneys and clients - are recorded as part of jail policy.

Tim Holland's co-counsel Frank Reynolds said he was learning for the first time that his phone calls with clients were being recorded.

Judge Rosemarie Aquilina ordered the practice stopped, saying, "I find it appalling that this has been occurring."

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or kgrasha@lsj.com.

Man accuses wife of fatally beating adopted son

Mar 29, 11:30 PM EST

MASON, Mich. (AP) -- Lisa Holland "went nuts" and beat her adopted son, Ricky, to death with a hammer when her husband Tim tried to send the 7-year-old to stay with his grandmother out of concern for his safety, Tim Holland said in a recorded jailhouse conversation.

The tape of Tim Holland's conversation with his adopted mother, Arcie Holland, was made Feb. 7 in the Ingham County Jail. It was played Wednesday, the 12th day of the preliminary hearing for Holland and his wife.

Both are charged with murder and first-degree child abuse in Ricky's death. Each blames the other for the boy's death.

Tim Holland told his adoptive mother that when he returned to his Williamston home in late June 2005 from military training in California, he discovered Ricky tied to his bed and looking "pale and peaked."

On July 2, Holland said, his wife forced Ricky to drink a family-sized can of tomato soup and ordered other family members not to feed him. Holland said he told his wife he was going to take the boy to stay with Arcie Holland.

"I tried to get him out of my house and I wanted to bring him to your house and that is what set her off," Tim Holland, 37, said on the recording. He told Lisa, 33, that "Ricky's going to stay with my mom for two weeks.

"And that's where she just went nuts. She came downstairs. I saw her yank him out of his room and then she hit him with a hammer."

District Judge Rosemarie Aquilina cannot consider the jailhouse recording as evidence against Lisa Holland. It only can be considered as evidence about Tim Holland's role in the crime.

The Hollands reported Ricky missing July 2 and told searchers and the media that he had run away. But in late January, Tim Holland led authorities to Ricky's body in a rural Ingham County game area after telling them his wife killed the boy. Tim Holland said he only helped dispose of the body.

The preliminary hearing was to continue Thursday.

BREAKING NEWS - Authorities investigating infant's injuries

03/30/2006

BAD AXE - According to a press release issued at 11:45 a.m. by the Michigan State Police post in Bad Axe, a 4-month-old boy is being treated for internal head injuries and remains in the Intensive Care Unit at Covenant Harrison Hospital in Saginaw.

According to the release, the child's parents took him to the emergency room at Huron Medical Center in Bad Axe at 12:20 p.m. Tuesday. The child was then air lifted to Covenant Harrison Hospital.

A trooper from the Bad Axe State Police Post and a protective service worker from Saginaw's Department of Human Services began an investigation due to the nature of the child's injuries, the press release said.

The Huron County Prosecutor's Office has been notified and is involved in the investigation. No other information was being released.

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Internet predators endanger teenagers

Thursday, March 30, 2006

By Janet Meana
The Grand Rapids Press

ALLENDALE TOWNSHIP -- A six-month friendship between an Allendale teenager and Jill Green, from North Carolina, wasn't what it appeared to be.

It turns out that Jill wasn't a 16-year-old but was instead an Internet predator.

The local teen's mother shared her family's experience during an Internet safety workshop at Allendale Middle School. She said the experience has left everyone in the family shaken.

"He (the predator) was hoping for a rebellious kid who'd sneak out a window and go," said the mom of the 13-year-old girl, who used e-mail, instant messaging and a telephone to stay in touch with her new friend.

The mother, whose name is being withheld to protect her daughter, said "Jill" sent pictures of herself and wove an elaborate tale that included the death of a mother and two boyfriends. The mother said the family grew suspicious when Jill begged her young friend to attend the funeral of the second boyfriend -- a boyfriend who wrote a song for the Allendale girl and left her \$6,000.

A reverse search on Jill's cell phone number revealed that it was registered to a 30-year-old man, and further investigation by an Internet specialist at the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department showed Jill Green did not exist, the mother told the 35 parents at the workshop. Sheriff's Department personnel advised the family to keep an eye on the girl, but they were told no crime had been committed.

"It's not just a California problem or a big-city problem. It's a problem here, too," Assistant Principal Doug Bol said of Internet predators.

The evening workshop started with free pizza and a 40-minute video that included information about a game intended to teach kids about online predators. Bol said an advisory board is reviewing the game, and, if approved, the school will make it available for parents and children. Technology director Paul Mulder warned parents about blogs, where kids post information online.

"Kids write stuff about themselves," he said. "They bare their souls, and they think it's private." He showed parents how a search under Allendale of the Xanga Web site reveals blogs of teen girls.

A few weeks ago, the school started blocking blog sites on its computers.

The workshop also provided tips on software for filtering, monitoring and accountability: Keep computers in common living areas of the home.

"When children have computers in their rooms, it tends to give them a greater sense of privacy," he said.

Have your kids sign an "Internet contract," that includes guidelines for safe use.
Be involved with your kids.

Efforts to stop bullying in schools

Kalamazoo Gazette

Thursday, March 30, 2006

Challenge Day, a workshop to combat school bullying, is being held this week at Hackett Catholic Central High School. It will be coming to more than 20 other schools in the area, including Milwood Middle School in Kalamazoo and Vicksburg, Comstock and Galesburg-Augusta high schools.

Schools across the state are intensifying efforts to curb bullying, including:

- n Portage Public Schools has begun a computer program designed to put middle school students in role-playing situations and assess their responses.

- n Students at an Ann Arbor middle school must sign an anti-bullying pledge.

- n A Lansing middle school has created a ``peace center" staffed with a behavioral specialist to help students deal with disputes.

Child abuse

Underfunding prevention makes state neglectful

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, March 30, 2006

Sparing children from abuse and neglect must be the state's priority, but the way the system is set up now, prevention is a forgotten luxury.

The problem, of course, is a lack of money. Between 2000 and 2006, key family preservation and abuse prevention programs have been slashed by \$15 million annually. And, even as the number of abuse and neglect cases investigated in the state swelled to 72,000 last year, the state Department of Human Services remained 130 caseworkers shy of doing the job right.

That means children are falling through holes in the very safety net that is supposed to catch them. Glaring cases of abuse and neglect are still likely to be investigated, but "marginal" ones are being set aside, according to one longtime caseworker.

Beyond being tragic, this is short-sighted. Abused children often do poorly in school, may be mentally impaired, suffer from low self-esteem and have a greater likelihood of running afoul of the law. When they grow up, they are also more likely to become abusers themselves. So, is money being saved in the long run or is it just being shifted from DHS to prisons and other state agencies?

State Attorney General Mike Cox has stepped into the fray, urging legislation to require protective services workers to probe homes with children where police have been called on domestic violence complaints. While Cox is right about the link between domestic violence and child abuse, his "solution" ignores the reality of too few caseworkers.

Cox should get behind Gov. Jennifer Granholm's budget proposal to add 51 CPS workers. He and others also should beat the drum for more money for prevention programs that help shore up troubled families.

The benefits of prevention cannot be overstated. Seventy percent of the children in the state's welfare system are there not because their parents abused them physically or sexually, but because they didn't have adequate food, clothing, shelter or proper supervision. Yet the Zero to Three Secondary Prevention Program - which provides parenting classes, home visits and child care to families with kids 3 and younger at risk of being abused or neglected - has had its funding cut 38 percent the past six years.

When money is tight, lawmakers often view the bottom line as more important than funding effective, long-term solutions. Doing so in this instance is another form of child neglect.

Child advocates seek to ease hurt of abuse victims St. Clair County wants to set up facility modeled after Care House

By DANIELLE QUISENBERRY
Port Huron Times Herald

Imagine sitting down with a stranger and telling them all about a first-time sexual encounter.

Imagine telling several strangers about the same experience over and over again.

This is what Robert Schumann likens to the repeated interviews children have to endure when they've been victims of sexual assault.

Schumann is operations director at the Macomb County Care House on Market Street in Mount Clemens. At the house, child sexual-assault victims are interviewed by one person while all the relevant individuals -prosecutors, detectives, Department of Human Services workers and any others - listen.

The St. Clair County Child Abuse/Neglect Council is trying to set up a similar place, called a child-advocacy center, in St. Clair County.

There are about 30 centers or care houses in Michigan.

By establishing a center, the council and community can spare a child the embarrassment and misery of relaying a painful story repeatedly, council director Sally Straffon said.

"It would be a tremendous benefit to our community. It's a much more humane approach," she said.

At the center, an individual specially trained to interview child victims would be equipped with an earpiece so those listening to the interview through a one-way glass window or video monitor can feed the interviewer necessary questions.

In Macomb, Care House employees step in to do interviews when a child 12 years old or younger is involved. They do about 300 interviews a year.

Digging for dollars

Plans for the St. Clair County center still are in the initial stages as the council is working to coordinate with county law-enforcement departments, the prosecutor's office and other relevant parties, Straffon said.

Before they can move forward, the council has to make sure all the agencies are on board and the funding is secure, she said.

While Straffon is unsure what it will cost - it depends on whether the council puts up a new building or renovates an existing one - there are state and national grants available, she said.

Schumann said members of the Care House's board of directors made the Macomb County center a reality in 1996 by putting their own money on the line to buy a building. The Care House costs about \$650,000 annually to run, but also has a clinic that performs minimally invasive examinations on child-abuse victims.

St. Clair County's center only would provide interviewing services, lowering the cost, Straffon said.

Once it does open, the council, which would be charged with its operation, has to make

sure there is money to run it from year to year.

After 10 years, Schumann said it still is tough for the Care House staff to secure enough funding to keep its doors open. "There is pressure every year. What services we provide is based on our income and what our income is going to be," he said.

Getting it going

Before moving to Macomb County, Schumann spent several years working in Port Huron with Child Protection Services. He said the center could work in St. Clair County.

There are people who can make it happen, he said.

Nearby Genesee, Shiawassee and Oakland counties have similar centers. Shiawassee's center is in Owosso, a city smaller in population than Port Huron.

At some point, the interested parties have to take a leap, Schumann said.

Filling a need

Unfortunately, there are enough cases that a center in Port Huron would be used, said Port Huron police Lt. Jim Jones.

St. Clair County Prosecutor Mike Wendling said it would benefit his office.

"The least amount of times they (the children) are interviewed, the more reliable their interview is," he said.

The environment where a child has to describe a traumatic event has to be comfortable, he said.

As long as the interviewer is a specially trained, objective professional, it can't be a negative proposal, said James Pratt, a Port Huron defense lawyer who has worked on cases involving child sexual assault and specializes in criminal cases and abuse and neglect incidents.

The interviewer has to ask the right questions and avoid suggestion, Wendling said.

"Anything that minimizes stress on a child, we support," he said.

Contact Danielle Quisenberry at (810) 989-6274 or dquisenberry@gannett.com.

Originally published March 30, 2006

State Senate approves Medicaid spending plan with higher copays

3/28/2006, 5:35 p.m. ET

By DAVID EGGERT
The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — The Michigan Senate on Tuesday approved a spending plan for the state's Medicaid program, though a dispute remains over asking recipients to pay for more of their health care.

Lawmakers also continue to disagree over funding for the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency.

The Senate voted 33-5 to send the \$11.2 billion spending bill to the House. It would cover the state Department of Community Health in the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.

Some Democrats opposed the bill because Republicans included language telling the department to generate \$5 million by increasing copays and premiums charged to Medicaid recipients.

"These clients are very poor and any kind of premium or copay or deductible really is a hindrance to care," said Sen. Deb Cherry, D-Burton. "If we want to improve their health, we have to make sure they have health care."

Republicans responded that asking some Medicaid patients to pay a small portion would prompt more ownership in their health care.

Patients currently are charged copays ranging from \$1 to \$3 for prescription drugs. They also owe \$1 for outpatient visits, \$2 for doctor's visits and \$50 for the first day of hospital stays.

The bill would leave the department with discretion to decide which patients should pay more and for what services.

The joint state-federal Medicaid program covers health care costs for more than 1.4 million poor people in Michigan — many of them children, seniors, pregnant women and the disabled.

Democrats also objected to a provision that would cut \$35 million from the mental health agency for Detroit and Wayne County. If the agency becomes an independent authority, the cut would be reduced to \$15 million.

Supporters said financial mismanagement and infighting at the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency are wasting money that could be used to help the area's mentally ill and developmentally disabled.

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Shirley Johnson, R-Troy, said that when Oakland County reorganized its mental health services as an authority, the number of employees dropped from 350 to 70.

"If you are sincere about helping people with mental illnesses, the dollars have to be directed to them," Johnson said. "They're the ones who need the help, not the bureaucracy."

But Democrats said other counties still have agencies and argued that the Wayne County agency couldn't change its structure without federal approval.

Both sides said the overall bill was a good start, as did a spokesman for the Department of Community Health.

Five lawmakers voted against the bill: Democrats Irma Clark-Coleman of Detroit, Bob Emerson of Flint and Martha Scott of Highland Park; and Republicans Bruce Patterson of Canton and Laura Toy of Livonia.

The Medicaid spending bill is Senate Bill 1083.

Wellness by decree: A government role?

Jackson Citizen Patriot

Wednesday, March 29, 2006

In its continuing effort to leave no American school child behind in any crucial area of education, the federal government is bringing on the big guns: By federal mandate, the kids will cease growing fatter.

OK, that was an over-simplification -- but not by much. A 2004 federal law will require all schools with federal lunch programs to adopt a wellness policy by July 1 to address nutritional and physical activity concerns. And it is clear what the intent here is. The 2003 National Survey of Children's Health concluded 10 million youth, ages 10 to 17, are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. That is 30.5 percent of the age group. In Michigan, the percent was slightly less -- 28.7 percent.

The reason the feds are so concerned -- and they are right to be -- is that the problem is growing worse. The number of children considered obese has doubled in the past 20 years for children aged 6 to 11. It has tripled for adolescents.

Thus, the federal government is proposing such things as giving local districts the authority to ban candy-bar sales and soda-pop vending machines. We wonder: Don't they already have that authority? Perhaps this is meant as a nudge for them to use it.

And they need the nudge. Why? Because sales of pop and candy bring in millions for local school districts. Jackson Public Schools, for example, realizes nearly \$1.3 million every year in gross sales from fund-raisers, much of it in candy sales. If the district were to squelch such fund-raisers, where will the replacement revenue come from?

Indeed, school officials are already saying if the feds want to order districts to implement more effective wellness strategies, who will pay for it? We have plenty of unfunded mandates in our schools; we don't necessarily need more.

Nevertheless, the issue of childhood obesity is a serious one. And while the schools may have a role in helping to control it, the real targets should be parents. Most children are overweight because parents are not diligent enough in paying attention to nutrition. Also, we live in a fast-food and junk-food world. Whatever the school does between the hours of roughly 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. doesn't change what happens after hours at home. That's where the child may spend hours watching the tube and snacking on transfat-laden food and sugar-laced soda pop.

We do believe schools should revisit their policies on what to sell in vending machines. And nutrition education is important. But it is naive to suppose that education alone is the solution to habits that begin at home. Parents are the first line of defense.

ABC12.com: Man won't accept terms of child support case

Man won't accept terms of child support case

Deal was reached in court last week



By Jeff Piechowski

Bay County - (03/28/06)--A Bay County man who's paid child support for 14 years -- even though DNA tests showed he wasn't the biological father -- says he won't accept the terms of a deal reached in court last week.

Doug Richardson has paid out nearly \$80,000 in child support, even after 1992 tests showed that another man was the biological father.

In court last week, his ex-wife proposed that all moneys owed to her, the child, who is now 20, and the boy's biological father would be erased.

That in essence would end this ordeal that started in 1992 when Richardson and Bonnie Lauria divorced.

The two did have another son together, and at the time of divorce, a judge ruled that Richardson could have no contact with his biological son, who is now 17, and would have to pay support for that child, as well as for the boy that wasn't Richardson's.

Initially last week, Richardson's attorney said the deal was a "small victory," but under the agreement, Richardson would still owe the state \$4,000 as well as paying the Friend of The Court \$500.

But Richardson says that the money is not the reason that he won't accept the deal.

By not accepting the deal, Richardson would more than likely have to pay the money the courts said he owed, as well as child support for his 17-year-old biological son.

The judge who originally ruled on this matter in 1992 is deceased, but was fully aware that showed the correct paternity in this case.

Girl arrested for threatening boy

Thursday, March 30, 2006

By Scott Hagen

shagen@citpat.com -- 768-4929

An 11-year-old Springport girl is in custody after she threatened to kill an older boy and then threw a knife at him Wednesday, police said.

Charges are pending against the girl in Probate Court, the division that handles juvenile matters. She is being held in the Jackson County Youth Home.

The 13-year-old victim told police the two started arguing at the girl's house on Spring Harbor Boulevard about 7 p.m. She said the boy threatened to spread rumors about her at school, said Capt. Kevin Stellingworth, with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office.

The girl then got upset and apparently threatened to kill the boy and herself, Stellingworth said. The boy and another 13-year-old witness told police she grabbed a 13-inch butcher knife and started coming after him, Stellingworth said.

The boy ran out of the house and the girl threw the knife at him, Stellingworth said. The knife missed the boy and lodged in a door in the kitchen, he said.

"Both boys turned and ran as fast as they could away from the house," he said.

Sheriff's Deputy Danny Deering took the girl into custody a short time later. The mother was not home at the time of the alleged incident, and children protective services was notified.

Chief Assistant Prosecutor Mark Blumer said it's rare to charge a juvenile with attempted murder.

"It's at least theoretically possible," he said. "But before we ever took such a drastic step we'd have to consider all of the circumstances, including the juvenile's prior history as well as the specific events that led up to the assault."

Class creates Web site for adoption agency

Thursday, March 30, 2006

By Julie Smith
The Grand Rapids Press

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP -- Some Northview High School students have given a local agency a home on the Web.

Students in Dave Tull's Web development class were assigned the task of creating an Internet site for Greater Hopes, a local adoption services agency.

Tull met with agency representative Cathy Raidna, a Northview parent, to gather information.

Raidna then got to pick from among the students' ideas.

Raidna said a site designed by sophomore Justine Dillenbeck grabbed her attention.

"It still stuck out as professional," Raidna said.

Dillenbeck, 15, said she is more interested in graphic design and art, so she had to get used to the technical computer language employed in Web design.

"At first it was really frustrating," she said. "After a while, it all clicked."

Dillenbeck and Raidna collaborated to pull the finished product together, which can be viewed at www.greaterhopes.org.

Raidna said she would recommend working with the Web design class to other groups.

Those wishing to have their Web site designed by the class can contact Tull by e-mail at dtull@nvps.net or by calling the high school at 363-4857.

Mentors share cultures with migrant children

Thursday, March 30, 2006

By Dale Dieleman
The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND HAVEN -- The Migrant Mentor Program is looking for a few good people this season. "We are looking for people who want to share their experience and life with a child and open them to the resources of the community," said Teresa Oosterhout, the program's coordinator. The program is organized through the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance to provide children of migrant families opportunities to learn about another culture, while also opening doors to the migrant community and their families.

Oosterhout said Lakeshore churches have been good sources for mentors in the past.

"I came into the program through my church," she said.

Although many parishioners attend churches frequented by migrant families, other churches are not always aware of the migrant families and the opportunities for cross-cultural experiences.

"Last year, we matched 69 mentors with children," she said. "We could have matched as many as 80 or more."

Children already are waiting for mentors, as the program runs from March through November.

"We know people do go away during the summer, and that is OK," Oosterhout said, adding mentors can make their own schedules of time and availability.

Although no stipends for expenses are offered, some area businesses such as restaurants and amusements do have coupons for free or discounted activities that are made available to the program and mentors.

She is seeking mentors who are willing to learn about another culture and have a minimum of four hours a week to spend with a child.

Area opportunities and destinations abound for mentors who want to take children on outings. Parks, beaches, zoos, amusement and recreation facilities are among the options, Oosterhout said. The children are generally ages 6 to high school age.

Although fluency in the Spanish language is not required, those who have some conversational abilities in Spanish have an advantage of getting closer to the child's family too, she said.

Often Oosterhout will visit the migrant camps from Holland to Grand Haven in the evenings to meet with parents, visit and play with the children and also find more children to recruit into the program.

"We found that some mentors spend a lot more time with the children than the minimum four hours a week that we ask for," she said.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 29, 2006

Governor, First Gentleman to Celebrate Cesar Chavez Day in Michigan

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and First Gentleman Daniel G. Granholm will celebrate Cesar E. Chavez Day on Friday, March 31, by attending events commemorating the birthday of the late civil rights and labor leader. Granholm signed legislation in 2003 that established March 31 as Cesar E. Chavez Day in Michigan.

"Cesar Chavez was a man who believed in and practiced being of service to others. His life was a testament to his belief that, 'we can choose to use our lives for others to bring about a better and more just world for our children,'" Granholm said. "As we celebrate this day of recognition, let us honor the extraordinary legacy of Cesar Chavez; let us acknowledge the strides he made to improve the lives of farm workers in this country; and let us reflect on the collective work that still lies ahead of us."

On Friday, March 31, Governor Granholm will provide remarks at the 11th Annual Cesar Chavez Commemorative Dinner. The event, entitled "Planting the Seeds of Change/Plantando Semillas para Cambio," will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the Ballroom of the Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Ave., in downtown Lansing.

On Thursday, March 30, Mulhern will speak at the Chavez Hispanic Scholarship Reception in Grand Rapids at 6:30 p.m. The event will take place on the 2nd floor of the Student Center at Grand Rapids Community College.

"Chavez's fasts and pilgrimages were symbolic of the poverty and plight of American farm workers, but they were also critical lessons on the power of individuals and communities to demand social change and improve the quality of their lives," Granholm said. "As we reflect on his contributions, we should also remember his words, 'We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community...our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.'"

This year's celebration marks the 40th anniversary of Chavez's historic 350 mile pilgrimage from Delano to the California capitol steps in Sacramento.

Chavez founded the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) in 1962 as a way to protect and serve farm workers whose poverty and disenfranchisement he shared. For more than three decades, Chavez led the UFW, working for dignity, respect, fair wages, medical coverage, pension benefits, and humane living conditions as well as countless other rights and protections for hundreds of thousands of farm workers.

Cesar Chavez died on April 23, 1993, at the age of 66.

Lansing State Journal

March 30, 2006

Free tax help available until April 17

Free tax help is available for low-income mid-Michigan residents.

The Assets for Independent Tax Coalition has Internal Revenue Service-certified volunteers who will review all applicable tax credits and prepare filings for area residents earning up to \$38,000.

Back filing for previous years also is available.

To make an appointment, call 337-8211 in Ingham County, or (866) 361-8211 in Eaton or Clinton counties.

The service will be available through April 17.



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

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April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

March 30, 2006

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has declared April 2006 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Michigan, stressing the importance of preventing child abuse.

To provide greater protection for children at risk, the Children's Trust Fund (CTF), the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), the Michigan State Police, the State Court Administrative Office, the Michigan Children's Ombudsman and the Michigan Departments of Community Health and Education are working closely with communities to prevent child abuse and neglect now and in the future.

"Child abuse and neglect hurts everyone and there are many ways DHS and CTF are working to prevent it," DHS Director Marianne Udow said. "We all have a stake in ensuring that parents have access to the tools and support they need to be successful. Parents and other caretakers who have resources and support are more likely to provide safe and healthy homes for their children."

The Children's Trust Fund (CTF) is a statewide non-profit organization that is dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The CTF works in partnership with its 72 local councils to serve 81 of Michigan's 83 counties. Local councils are independent, community-based organizations that identify needs and facilitate collaborative prevention programs for children and families in their community.

In addition to the financial support it provides to local councils statewide, CTF awards grants to direct service providers across the state that provide the following types of support services to families:

- ◆ Teen parenting support programs.
- ◆ Early childhood development awareness programs.
- ◆ Parent education.
- ◆ Respite care.
- ◆ Referral services.
- ◆ Home visitation.
- ◆ Public awareness campaigns, such as "Never Shake a Baby," and in Michigan, "We Love Our Kids" campaigns.

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm signed legislation enabling the tax check-off amended the Income Tax Act to reinstate the income tax check-off that allows taxpayers to contribute money to the CTF. Michigan taxpayers are encouraged to join in the fight against child abuse and neglect by donating via their tax returns. Individuals can now designate on their annual tax returns that a contribution of \$5 or more of their refund be credited to the CTF for tax years beginning January 1, 2005. The check-off is located on line 30 of the Michigan tax form. Taxpayers will need to fill in the amount they wish to donate, with the minimum being \$5. The donation can be deducted on the next year's tax form.

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"The Children's Trust Fund is working hard to ensure that Michigan's children and their parents live better lives," Children's Trust Fund board chair Nancy Moody said. "All families benefit from the help of strong, supportive neighborhoods and communities. Strengthening families and preventing child abuse require the shared commitment of individuals and organizations in every community. There is no better way to safeguard the future of our society and our state."

The Michigan State Police also play an important role in protecting Michigan's families and children by providing investigative resources to law enforcement agencies through the Michigan Missing Children Information Clearinghouse, working with schools and community groups to promote safety, and providing training to foster care and child protective services workers.

"From participating in programs that promote community awareness, to using investigative tools to reunite families with lost loved ones, law enforcement officers across the state are working to ensure the safety of Michigan's children every month of the year," Col. Tadarial Sturdivant, director of the Michigan State Police, said.

For more information about the Children's Trust Fund, visit the DHS Web site at www.michigan.gov/dhs

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